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initiating a call to a first party from the call center via a communication medium,
wherein the call is to be serviced by a first agent of the call center if the call is answered by
5 the first party;

monitoring said communication medium for signals received from a location
associated with said first party after said step of initiating a call;

detecting an initial audible signal received from the first party location via said
communication medium, wherein the initial audible signal is the first signal detected after
10 said call is answered;

initiating processing of said initial audible signal in a call classifier to determine a
characteristic of said audible signal, said step of initiating processing includes initiating
processing that will analyze whether said initial audible signal was generated by a live party
during the call; and

15 playing a prerecorded greeting over said communication medium during said call,
said prerecorded greeting being played during a time period when said call classifier is
processing said initial audible signal, wherein the analysis whether said initial audible signal
was generated by a live party is the initial analysis made during the call, wherein the
prerecorded greeting is recorded in the voice of the first agent.

2. (Original) The method claimed in claim 1, wherein:

said step of playing a prerecorded greeting includes detecting a period of silence on
said communication medium and initiating playback of said prerecorded greeting in response
thereto.

3. (Canceled)

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4. (Original) The method claimed in claim 3, further comprising the step of:
when said call classifier determines that said initial audible signal was generated by
a live party at the first party location, establishing a talk path between the live party and an
agent at the call center after playback of said prerecorded greeting has ended.

5. (Original) The method claimed in claim 3, further comprising the step of:
when said call classifier determines that said initial audible signal was not generated
by a live party at the first party location, terminating the call.

6. (Original) The method claimed in claim 1, wherein:
said communication medium includes a local loop associated with a telephone
network.

7. (Original) The method claimed in claim 1, wherein:
said step of initiating a call includes dialing a telephone number associated with said
first party and said initial audible signal is received from the location associated with the first
party during said call.

8. (Currently Amended-Four Times) A method for use in managing an outgoing
call comprising the steps of:

placing an outgoing call from a call center to a remote party location over a
communication network, wherein the outgoing call is to be handled by a first agent of the call
center.

processing an initial signal received from said remote party location during said call
to determine a source type of said initial signal, wherein the processed signal is the first
signal detected after said call is answered;

playing a prerecorded greeting to said remote party location during said step of
processing, wherein said step of playing a prerecorded message includes detecting a period

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of silence after receipt of said initial signal and initiating playback of said prerecorded greeting in response thereto, wherein the prerecorded greeting is recorded in the voice of the first agent; and

15 after said prerecorded greeting has ended, establishing a talk path between ~~a local~~ the first agent and the remote party location when it is determined that said initial signal is a voice signal that was generated by a live party during the call, wherein the determination whether the initial signal is a voice signal that was generated by a live party during the call is the initial such determination made during the call.

9. (Original) The method claimed in claim 8, further comprising the step of: terminating the call when it is determined that said initial signal was not generated by a live party during the call.

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10. (Original) The method claimed in claim 8, wherein:
said step of placing an outgoing call includes dialing a telephone number associated with a remote party and said initial signal processed in the processing step is the initial audible signal received during said call.

11. (Original) The method claimed in claim 8, wherein:
said communication network includes a public switched telephone network.

12. (Original) The method claimed in claim 8, wherein:
said step of processing a signal includes using a call classifier to determine whether the initial signal was generated by a live party during the call.

13. (Canceled)

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14. (Currently Amended) The method claimed in claim 8, wherein:

said step of establishing a talk path includes passing control of said call to said ~~local~~ first agent for a remainder of the call.

15. (Currently Amended-Three Times) A system for use within a call center, comprising:

a call processing unit operable to place a call to a remote party location via a communication network, wherein a first agent is assigned to service the call if the call is answered by a live party at the remote party location;

a call classifier unit operable to determine when said call is answered, detect an audible signal from the remote party location, and analyze a first detected signal received from said remote party location to determine whether said first detected signal originated from [[a]]the live party during the call, wherein the first detected signal is the first signal detected by the call classifier unit after said call is answered;

a message playback unit operable to play back a prerecorded message to said remote party location while said call classifier unit is analyzing said first detected signal, wherein the prerecorded message is recorded in the voice of the first agent; and

a switch unit operable to establish a talk path between a local agent position and said remote party location when it is determined by said call classifier unit that said first detected signal originated from [[a]]the live party during the call, wherein the determination whether the first detected signal is a voice signal that was generated by [[a]]the live party during the call is the initial such determination made during the call.

16. (Original) The system claimed in claim 15, wherein:

said message playback unit plays back said prerecorded message in response to detection of a period of silence during said call.

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17. (Original) The system claimed in claim 15, wherein:
said external communication network includes a public switched telephone network
and said first detected signal is received during said call.

18. (Original) The system claimed in claim 15, wherein:
said external communication network includes at least one of the following: a
satellite communication network, an optical fiber communication network, a local area
network, a wide area network, a municipal area network, a private branch exchange network,
5 an Internet network, and a terrestrial wireless network.

19. (Currently Amended) The system claimed in claim 15, wherein:
said call processing unit includes means for terminating said call when it is
determined by said call classifier unit that said first detected signal did not originate from
E1 [[a]]the live party during the call.

20. (Original) The system claimed in claim 15, wherein:
said call processing unit and said switch unit are implemented within a common
digital processor.

21. (Original) The system claimed in claim 15, wherein:
said call processing unit and said message playback unit are implemented within a
common digital processor.

22. (Original) The system claimed in claim 15, wherein:
said call classifier unit is part of a pool of call classifier units; and
said call processing unit is operable to assign call classifier units from said pool of
call classifier units to individuals calls being supported by the call center.

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23. (Previously Presented) The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the call to the first party is the initial call made by the call center to the first party.

24. (Previously Presented) The method claimed in claim 8, wherein the outgoing call to the remote party location is the initial call made to the remote party location.

25. (Currently Amended) The system claimed in claim 15, wherein the [[the]] call to the remote party location is the initial call made by the call center to the remote party location.

Please add the following new claims 26-28:

26. (New) The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the first agent is in a pool of multiple agents associated with the call center, wherein the greeting is a personal greeting, and wherein each agent in the pool of agents has a corresponding prerecorded greeting recorded in the respective agents' own voice and further comprising:

5 selecting a second agent, different from the first agent, in the pool of agents to service a second call to a second party location, different from the first party location, over the communication medium; and

10 playing a second prerecorded greeting corresponding to the second agent during call classification of a second initial audible signal received from the second party location during the second call.

27. (New) The method claimed in claim 8, wherein the first agent is in a pool of multiple agents associated with the call center, wherein the greeting is a personal greeting, and wherein each agent in the pool of agents has a corresponding prerecorded greeting recorded in the respective agents' own voice and further comprising:

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5 selecting a second agent, different from the first agent, in the pool of agents to service a second call to a second party location, different from the remote party location, over the communication network; and

 playing a second prerecorded greeting corresponding to the second agent during call classification of a second initial audible signal received from the second party location during
10 the second call.

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28. (New) The system claimed in claim 15, wherein the first agent is in a pool of multiple agents associated with the call center, wherein the message is a personal greeting, wherein each agent in the pool of agents has a corresponding prerecorded message recorded in the respective agents' own voice, wherein the call center is operable to select a second
5 agent, different from the first agent, in the pool of agents to service a second call to a second party location, different from the remote party location, over the communication network, and wherein the message playback unit is operable to play back a second prerecorded message, different from the prerecorded message played back to the remote party location, corresponding to the second agent during call classification of a second initial audible signal,
10 different from the initial audible signal from the remote party location, received from the second party location during the second call.